

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported to DHHS

Note: Sound bites on this topic will be available shortly at: www.dhhs.ne.gov/audio

Lincoln – A person in the Central District Health Department area (Hall, Hamilton, and Merrick Counties) tested positive for West Nile virus according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The person was not hospitalized.

“This is the first human case so far this season and we expect to see more,” said Dr. Tom Safranek, State Epidemiologist for DHHS. “West Nile virus can be a mild illness for some and serious for others. If you haven’t been taking steps to protect yourself, it’s important to start now.”

Preventive tips:

- Make sure your mosquito repellent contains DEET, picaridin, lemon eucalyptus oil or IR3535.
- Dress in long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks when you’re outside.
- Dusk and dawn are times when mosquitoes are most active. Limit outdoor activities.
- Drain standing water around your home. Standing water and warmth breed mosquitoes.

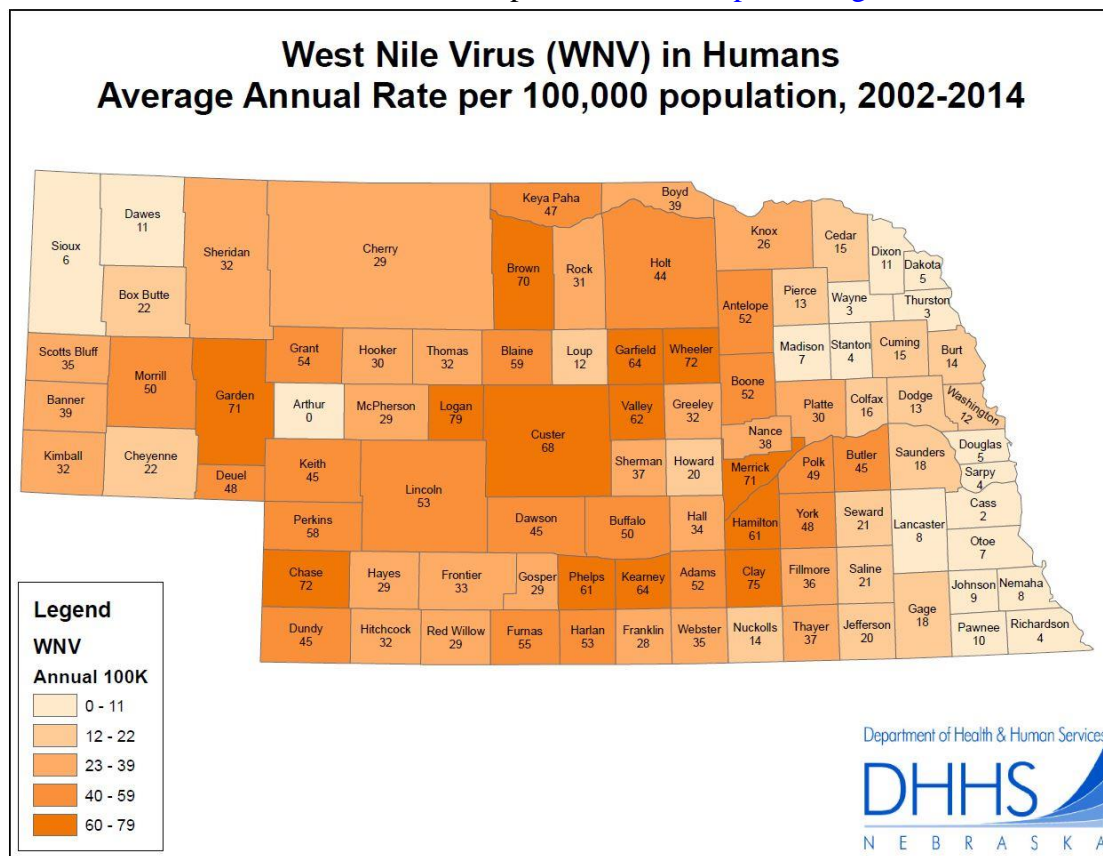
West Nile virus is transmitted to people through the bite of a mosquito that picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people who are infected will have no symptoms or only mild flu-like symptoms. Some people will develop a fever with other symptoms like headache, body aches, vomiting, fatigue and weakness. Less than one percent of people will develop a serious illness like encephalitis or meningitis (inflammation of the brain and surrounding tissues). People over 50 and those with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable to the disease and are more likely to experience serious consequences.

DHHS started its West Nile virus surveillance at the beginning of June. One mosquito pool tested positive in Webster County. No birds have tested positive for the virus.

WNV in Nebraska

Year	Human Cases	Deaths
2014	142	8
2013	226	5
2012	193	4
2011	29	0
2010	39	2

West Nile virus in humans statewide map 2002-2014 - <http://1.usa.gov/1KskkBz>



Subscribe to the DHHS West Nile virus webpage to get the latest updates - www.dhhs.ne.gov/wnv.